

CLAIMS:

1. A method of securing valuable articles within a tamper evident primary container (10), including the steps of:

5 -- partitioning the primary container into first (30) and second (32) portions that communicate with each other through at least one path (34.2) arranged to prevent undetectable access to the first portion (30) through the second portion (32);
-- inserting articles to be secured into the first portion (30) and sealing (26) at least that portion; and
10 -- selectively dispensing a staining medium (12) into the second portion (32) from where it can flow into the first portion through the path (34).

2. A primary container (10) for articles to be secured comprising an envelope (14) with tamper evident features, a first opening (22) through which articles can be inserted into the envelope, and means (26) for sealing the first opening, wherein

15 -- partitioning means (34, 50) is provided to separate the envelope (14) into first (30) and second (32) portions that communicate with each other through at least one path (34.2, 50); and
-- a second opening (36, 36.1) is formed into the second portion through which a staining medium can be introduced into the second portion when desired.

20 3. The primary container as claimed in claim 2, wherein the path (34.2, 50) is constructed and arranged so as at least to inhibit access to the first portion (30) through the second portion (32).

25 4. The primary container as claimed in either of claims 2 or 3, wherein the path (34.2, 50) is constructed and arranged so as to ensure that access to the first portion through the second portion is detectable.

30 5. The primary container as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein the envelope (14) is substantially rectangular, the first opening (22) extends substantially parallel to one pair of opposed edges (18, 20) and the partitioning means (34, 50) extends substantially parallel to the other pair of opposed edges (16).

6. The primary container as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 5, wherein the envelope (14) is substantially rectangular and the partitioning means (34) extends substantially from one of the edges (18) to the opposite edge (20).

5 7. The primary container as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 6, wherein a plurality of spaced apart paths (34.2, 50) are formed through the partitioning means between the first and second portions.

10 8. The primary container as claimed in claim 7, wherein the paths (34.2, 50) are formed by an intermittent seam line.

9. The primary container as claimed in claim 8, wherein the intermittent seam line is formed by an intermittent joining method selected from: welding, stitching and bonding.

15 10. The primary container as claimed in any one of claims 7 to 9, wherein the spaced apart paths are of substantially similar size (50).

20 11. The primary container as claimed in claim 10, wherein the lengths of the spaced apart paths (34.2, 50) are in the range of 2 to 20 mm.

12. The primary container as claimed in claim 10, wherein the lengths of the spaced apart paths (34.2, 50) are in the range of 2 to 4 mm.

25 13. The primary container as claimed in any one of claims 7 to 9, wherein the openings (34,2) increase in size in a direction away from the second opening into the second portion.

30 14. The primary container as claimed in claim 13, wherein the lengths of the openings ranges from 2 to 50 mm.

15. The primary container as claimed in claim 13, wherein the lengths of the openings ranges from 2 to 20 mm.

16. The primary container as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15, wherein the partitioning means (34) is substantially continuous from the edge adjacent the second opening for a desired length and then is formed with the spaced openings (34.2) to form the spaced apart paths.

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17. The primary container as claimed in claims 2 to 16, wherein the relative configuration of the size of the second opening (36, 36.1) in the second portion (32), the width of the second portion (32) and the dimension of the openings (34.2, 50) between the first (30) and second (32) portions ensures that attempts to insert probes into the first portion through the slit and second portion results in tamper evident stressing of the plastics material of the envelope.

18. The primary container as claimed in claim 7, wherein the path (50) is formed by an intermittent seam line (50.1), with the portions of the seam line substantially overlapping one another and providing tortuous flow paths between the first and second portions. (Fig. 2).

19. The primary container as claimed in claim 18, wherein the seam line portions (50.1) are selected from straight, curved and sinuous as desired.

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20. The combination of a primary container (10) as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 19 and a dispensing apparatus (12) that has a store of staining medium, means to pressurise the staining medium, and means (42) to convey pressurized staining medium into the second portion (32) of the primary container.

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